

of the small steamers - the "Wyrallah", the "Queenscliffe" or perhaps the "Despatch" that traded to the Gippsland Lakes. On mail day a special look-out was kept for the steamer. As soon as she poked her nose through "Little Burke Street" to the westward two or three miles distant, the first person to sight her, be it man or boy, a great shout would go up "WYWUP" which was a contraction of "Wyrallah" and meant the particular supply ship of the day. "WYWUP" was the signal to drop everything and for the boat's crew to hasten to the landing, lower the boat, proceed alongside the steamer and bring back the 'goodies' which sometimes included a packet of lollies for the children. Sometimes a couple of crayfish would be handed to the Captain for his supper.

Nineteen miles to the eastward of Wilsons Promontory ~~xxxxxx~~ is Cliffy Island. Usually, if the weather was favorable, WYWUP would call there too. Sometimes, however, the weather was far from favorable and in these circumstances supplies would be carried on to the Gippsland Lakes and, if possible, landed when the steamer was returning towards Melbourne several days later. Sometimes the "fresh" meat was, of necessity, thrown overboard but the mail was carried back and forth until it could finally be delivered.

At the time I decided to go somewhere "for a quiet rest", my family was stationed at Cliffy Island.

One morning I joined the old "Queenscliffe" at her berth far up the Yarra River and before the Spencer Street Bridge forced all seagoing vessels to berth lower down the river. The "Queenscliffe" was a sturdy little steamer of about 300 tons burden. She was essentially a cargo-carrier but was equipped with two bunks which were available for passengers. These bunks were on either side of the officer's dining saloon and ran fore and aft adjacent to the dining table. One slept on the bunks at night and sat upon them at mealtimes.

We slid slowly down the Yarra River and headed ^{Via} ~~down~~ the West Channel towards the Heads. There was quite a 'chop' on in the Rip so the Captain decided to anchor off Sorrento for a few hours until

the ebb tide slackened and a safe passage through the Rip could be accomplished. I was enjoying my sleep on the following morning when the ~~steward~~ ^{(he was a combined} cook-steward~~x~~ roused me out as he wanted to set the table for breakfast. We were off Cape Schanck at this time and rolling in a steady swell from the south. Soon after lunch ~~was~~ tied up for an hour or two at ~~xxxxx~~ Waratah Bay to discharge stores for the lime-kiln workers that were employed there then.

As ~~the~~ ^{that evening} daylight faded, and night crept across the sky steady rain began to fall. There was no protection on the deck of the old "Quuenscliffe". ~~so~~, the one and only passenger, had no alternative to climbing down the almost vertical ladder to the "dining saloon" and, under the fitful light of a smoking oil lamp wait for the arrival at Wilsons Promontory. Soon we cleared "Little Burke Street" and I could imagine the call WYWUP going up at the lighthouse and the ~~running~~ feet as the boats crew hastened to the landing. Soon the mailbag and a parcel of stores had been lowered into the lighthouse boat and we were on our way again towards Clifty Island.

During my earlier years, and while I was at sea myself, I had become quite familiar with the morse lamp and other means of signalling between ship and shore. As we approached Clifty Island in darkness and rain I noticed a morse lamp in operation near the lighthouse and attempted to read the signals. However, the rain and the motion of the little steamer made this quite difficult so much so that I mis-read an important word. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ The message I ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ received was: "Hope Fred will get better". ~~This~~ Reference to 'getting better' intrigued me as I had been quite well and was thoroughly enjoying the sea voyage. The message I was supposed to receive was: "Hope Fred will get butter". There had been no delivery of stores at Clifty Island during several weeks and all butter on the island had been exhausted. Bread which was home-made, and dripping together with local fish was the staple diet.

Naturally my folk were glad to see me, and I to see them. ^{butter - less as I was,} There was much to talk about and the necessary fish to be caught. I had gone to Clifty Island hoping to remain there for three weeks but this

was not to be. On the tenth day there were obvious indications of bad weather developing and indeed already there was a long swell running in from the south ~~and~~ while a westerly wind was quickly building up a choppy sea. Once the weather turns "sour" at Clifly Island any chance of landing on the island or leaving it is extremely remote. It so happened that on that day the "Wyrallah" en-route from Melbourne to Bairnsdale was due to pass Clifly Island and, it was hoped, unload much needed stores. As I had a job to go to in Melbourne it was decided that, if a boat could put off from the Island when the "Wyrallah" arrived, I should join her rather than risk an enforced wait and perhaps jeopardise my job. With some sadness at leaving 'home' again so soon, and with some difficulty in getting the boat away, I said farewell and climbed aboard the "Wyrallah".

By comparison with the "Queenscliffe", "Wyrallah" was an oceangoing liner. She was of about 500 tons burden, had four 2-berth cabins and a small but real dining saloon.